

SB 88 Hearing Committee

I am Bill Leininger, my family and I live approximately 18 miles south of the Missouri River and 1.5 miles west of the Judith River. Our farm is included in the area addressed by the Water Rights Compact for the Bureau of Land Management Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Our only usable water source is a 2,700 ft. deep well that we drilled in 2002. We have two water rights, 41S 30005097, that is for domestic use, and 41s 30005803, that is a permitted water right for irrigation and geothermal heating for our house. Both of these water rights have a priority date of 2003.

The Monument water right has a priority date of January 17, 2001 even though no official claim of water was made in Montana at that time. The Compact Commission has negotiated with the BLM and has arrived at a compact that includes the following terms:

1) **Protection of all existing water rights** arising under State law with a priority date earlier than **June 1, 2012**. All of these existing rights are considered **Senior** to any water rights granted to the **BLM** under this compact.

The protection of these water rights is of **great importance** to me and my family; our water rights are protected by **SB88!**

2) **Continued exception for permitting domestic wells and stock ponds** and other uses that meet the requirements for exception to permitting as listed in 85-2-306MCA. These uses **will not be subjected to call by the BLM** under the specifications of this compact.

This condition to the Monument water right is of great importance to **me and all other water users in the compact area** in-that it protects all current and **future domestic water and stock water rights** under 85-2-306.

The Montana Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission has negotiated a compact with the BLM that my family and I strongly support.

The compact protects Montana water users far better than if myself and other individual water users tried to defend our water rights against the BLM. I'm no match against the BLM and the U. S. government in the courts. The permitted water right I have cost me over \$60,000 in legal and professional fees. If the hearing committee and the legislature fail to approve this compact I and other individual water right holders in Montana will have to face the BLM as individuals. I don't have deep enough pockets to even consider defending my water rights against the BLM alone.

It is of great importance to me and other Montanan's that the Compact is

APPROVED

Respectfully

Bill & Wendy Leininger

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